

July 18, 2023

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 23-62

The purpose of this All County Letter is to provide updated guidance for the Child Welfare Services-California Automated Response and Engagement System project Core Constituent Participation and clarifications on the existing CARES-Live electronic data processing maintenance and operations costs and the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System Data Clean-up activities.



KIM JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

CALIFORNIA HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • www.cdss.ca.gov



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

July 18, 2023

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 23-62

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
COUNTY WELFARE FISCAL OFFICERS
ALL TITLE IV-E TRIBES

SUBJECT: REVISED GUIDANCE FOR THE CHILD WELFARE
SERVICES-CALIFORNIA AUTOMATED RESPONSE AND
ENGAGEMENT SYSTEM PROJECT FOR CORE CONSTITUENT
PARTICIPATION

REFERENCE: ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE [1-79-22](#); ALL COUNTY
LETTER [22-01](#); ALL COUNTY LETTER [21-27](#); COUNTY FISCAL
LETTER [22/23-41](#), COUNTY FISCAL LETTER [22/23-55](#), COUNTY
FISCAL LETTER [22/23-72](#), COUNTY FISCAL LETTER [22/23-96](#),
AND COUNTY FISCAL LETTER [23/24-03](#)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to provide updated guidance for the Core Constituent Participation (CCP) on the Child Welfare Services-California Automated Response and Engagement System (CWS-CARES) project at the Child Welfare Digital Services (CWDS). Two new Program Codes (PC) have been developed to replace the current CWS-CARES claiming infrastructure. This ACL also clarifies that the CWS-CARES project is distinct from the Maintenance and Operations (M&O) activities of the CARES-Live application and Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) Data Clean-up activities.

BACKGROUND

The Child Welfare Digital Services (CWDS) is a collaboration of the Child Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), Office of Technology and Solutions Integration (OTSI), formerly known as the Office of Systems Integration, and the California Department of

Social Services (CDSS) with ongoing Tribal engagement and input from the Title IV-E Tribes. The CWDS is responsible for the development of the new statewide child welfare information system, named CWS-CARES, which is planned to replace the CWS/CMS legacy system once implemented statewide. In consultation with the CWDA, Core County Constituent groups were vetted and approved to represent the interests of all counties for their assigned process areas. The Core County Constituents receive a larger allocation due to their specific engagement in a process area. By contrast, non-Core County Constituents and Title IV-E Tribes comprise those that are not part of a designated process area and thus participate less frequently.

The CWS-CARES development activities have historically been separated into nine distinct service modules: Intake; Case Management; Court Processing; Licensing; Financial Management; Resource Management; Eligibility; Administration; and Implementation. Unique PCs were assigned to each of the nine digital service modules based on program needs at the time.

As the development activities of the CWS-CARES project changed over time, the CDSS received feedback from counties that it was difficult to determine which of the nine CWS-CARES PCs to claim to when performing the various CWS-CARES CCP activities. To resolve this issue, effective July 1, 2023, the CDSS will deactivate the nine PCs currently associated with the CWS-CARES CCP and replace them with two new PCs, one for development and another for implementation.

Counties are advised to continue to complete the CWS-CARES project County Participation and Tracking Survey provided by the OTSI. The County Participation and Tracking Survey is specific to the CWS-CARES project and is not an official means of claiming for counties. This survey is separate from the County Expense Claim Reporting Information System.

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES-CALIFORNIA AUTOMATED RESPONSE AND ENGAGEMENT SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

Effective July 1, 2023, both Core and non-Core Constituents and the Title IV-E Tribes should use the new CWS-CARES development and/or implementation codes described in [County Fiscal Letter \(CFL\) 23/24-03](#), based on the list of CCP activities below.

DEVELOPMENT

All Constituents and Title IV-E Tribes may claim development activities, including but not limited to, the following:

- Attend CWS-CARES development related meetings.

- Engage and participate in the design, development, and testing of new functionality including, but not limited to, Identity and Access Management, forms, and reporting.
- Assist in identifying relevant federal, state, and county policy to aid in the development of business requirements.
- Assist with the research, design, testing, and conversion of external systems to CWS-CARES.
- Participate in data validation and data conversion activities.
- Assist in Organizational Change Management (OCM) and preparation for implementation activities.

IMPLEMENTATION

All Constituents and Title IV-E Tribes may claim implementation activities, including but not limited to, the following:

- Attend CWS-CARES implementation related meetings.
- Document as-is business processes and participate in the to-be business processes for each digital service.
- Participate in the statewide release of functionality, incident management, and end-user support.
- Support the development of the Application/OCM/System Administrator Training.
- Support the “train-the-trainer” model for county users.

Note, this may not be a fully comprehensive list of development and implementation activities. Please reach out to the Child Welfare System Branch (CWSB) at CMSAdminSvcUnit@osi.ca.gov for activity related questions.

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES/CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM DATA CLEAN-UP

The growing presence of duplicate records in the CWS/CMS database has reached a critical mass not only for child welfare practice, but also for the preparation activities required for the transition to CWS-CARES. The [ACL 22-01](#) authorizes county participation in the Data Clean-up activities that will require county end-user manual correction in the CWS/CMS or county subject matter expert consultation related to the CWS/CMS. These Data Clean-up activities became effective October 1, 2021, and are planned to continue through June 30, 2025. These Data Clean-Up activities are distinct from the data validation and conversion efforts occurring in support of the CWS-CARES project and should be charged to the PCs identified on pages three and four of [CFL 22/23-96](#).

CARES-LIVE SYSTEM TO MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

The CARES-Live was initially developed to replace the existing CWS/CMS. However, the CDSS decided to pursue a different method for developing the CWS-CARES system and stopped development of CARES-Live. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) no longer considers CARES-Live as the new system in development and has classified the status as M&O. In the M&O phase, the ACF deemed CARES-Live tools as ineligible to receive federal funding at the enhanced rate and the discount rate must be applied. Please see [CFL 22/23-55](#) for the most recent claiming instructions for CARES-Live.

As CARES-Live is no longer eligible to receive enhanced federal funding, distinct claiming instructions were made to separate CARES-Live activities from the CWS-CARES project. The CARES-Live electronic data processing costs include, but are not limited to, user support and troubleshooting, bug fixing and testing, and supporting software releases. The [CFL 22/23-55](#) describes the CARES-Live M&O code used to claim administrative costs necessary for the proper and efficient administration of the CARES-Live program.

The CARES-Live system is made up of three modules. These include the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool, Snapshot, and Facility Search. Effective 2021, all Child Welfare Departments are required to enter CANS data into the CARES-Live system for all children with an open case regardless of which agency completes the CANS, as described in [ACL 21-27](#). Time spent using the CANS tool, Snapshot, and Facility Search should be claimed to the benefitting program. More information on the CARES-Live tools can be found on pages three and four of [CFL 22/23-72](#).

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or need additional guidance regarding the information in this letter, contact the CWSB at CMSAdminSvcsUnit@osi.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By

DIANNA WAGNER
Assistant Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division

cc: All Chief Probation Officers